

The Danish West Indies

Harbor of St. Thomas

Danish West India Type

Sketch of the Islands Which Uncle Sam is offering \$25,000,000 -- and Harbors and Fertile Lands Awaiting the Guidance of the Energetic American.

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More than half a century ago Secretary Seward opened negotiations with Denmark for the purchase of the islands of the West Indies. Although his undertaking was not successful, it eventually resulted in the purchase of the islands in 1917 by which the United States obtained possession of the islands. The price at that time was \$25,000,000. The agreement, however, was rejected by the Danish Parliament supposedly because of German influence. From that time the bargaining was repeated, but it is said that the sale was always blocked by Germany, although some diplomats declare that opposition came from the Danish crown—an opposition which still exists. The sentiment of the natives of the islands is for the United States, and it is believed that they are to have in the matter.

Islands of Value in Wartime. Naval officers regard these islands as most valuable for any European power wishing to quarrel with the United States, and have always been a point of view from a strategic point of view to keep them from falling into enemy hands. St. Thomas has the best harbor in the West Indies, and is surrounded by three sides of land from which drift down the breezes in the world, large enough to shelter at least hundreds of ships. The Hamburg Line have a large coaling station at this point and did much of



View of St. Croix from the Sea

the fact of the inhabitants. A few deer are to be found in the hills, but apart from these there is nothing to attract the hunter. To those who are fond of boating the bay offers a charming place for this sport.

The population of thirteen thousand are mainly negroes of a good-natured type, who at present are practically destitute. Now that commerce has departed and there is little agriculture to fall back on their condition is indeed pitiable, and should the deal between Denmark and the United States go through, our Government will face a relief problem to save its new wards from starvation.

Bay Rum Staple Article. There is little manufacturing of any kind except the bay rum industry, and this too has been practically ruined by the war on account of the difficulty in shipping it to market. This bay rum, for which St. Thomas is noted, is made by macerating the leaves and berries of the bay tree with pure new rum and then distilling the mixture by passing it through a "worm." It is regarded as the best bay rum in the world, and is, in fact, the only perfect product of that article. In the tourist days it was quite the thing for the visitor to the islands to bring home a supply of St. Thomas bay rum.

Sugar Industry Poor. Fifty years ago the sugar industry of the islands was an important one, bringing in large revenue, but improved methods of manufacture in more developed countries and outside competition proved too much for it and now in St. Thomas it is suffering from stagnation and decay. The cane at present grows wild and under proper care the industry might be revived. White people are few and the blacks do not know how to help themselves. The white men who remain are Danish officials, a few

plantation overseers and shopkeepers. The majority of the latter closed up shortly after the beginning of the war and left the islands, consequently the Danish West Indies of today are inhabited almost solely by the black man. The climate is not conducive to energy and the agricultural parts of the islands have been gradually going to waste.

One of the sights of the town during the tourist days was watching the women coal ships, for this was done almost wholly by women who could carry a bushel basket of coal nicely balanced on their heads with apparent ease. Another sight familiar to the tourists was the experience of the swimmers—boys who swam out to meet incoming vessels and who would dive for coals thrown overboard by the passenger—catching the coin before it had sunk six feet in the water. Although the water about St. Thomas is infested with sharks the natives have no fear of them and the diving boys will actually swim among the sea monsters and chase them away from the ships. There is no record of one of these boys being injured at the game.

St. John Island. St. John Island, too, has been practically given over to the blacks although its rare tropical beauty deserves a better fate. Coral Bay has the reputation of being hurricane proof and has good anchorage places in deep water. Like St. Thomas, it was once the rendezvous of pirates whose existence here at one time is shown by the rusty cannon scattered over the island in fortifications which have now fallen into decay. The woods of St. John are literally alive with birds—wild pigeons, doves and gaily tinted humming birds predominating.

St. Croix. The island of St. Croix was so named by Christopher Columbus when he came through the Caribbean in 1493 on his second voyage. It has a population of twenty-five thousand—mostly blacks, but with a large sprinkling of whites than are to be found on the other islands. Most of the planters are of Irish extraction and they make rum and sugar, using the most improved machinery. Like St. Thomas, the people have chosen English as their tongue, although many of the negroes speak a jargon of English and Danish mixed together.

There are two towns on this island—Christiansted on the east and Frederiksted on the west. It was at the latter in 1867 that the old United States frigate *Monongahela* went ashore during a tidal wave. After the storm passed the frigate was left standing erect among the houses of the town. The natives thought that the United States had come to take possession of the island, and not until the ship was again on the water could they be assured that the landing of the ship in their midst was an accident.

This island is by far the richest of the three and several splendid plantations are owned by Americans. The island of St. Croix has long been more American than Danish, as its trade has been with the United States instead of with Denmark. It possesses admirable roads, some following close to the edges of the coast and affording glimpses of beautiful bathing beaches where huge piles of pink coral shells may be seen ready to be burnt for lime. Other highways lead to the hills and to the various sugar and pineapple plantations, while the most attractive of all runs between the cities of Christiansted and Frederiksted. All along this road one sees the old ruined windmills once used to grind the sugarcane. Today American-made machinery does the work and the tall chimneys of the sugar mills rise amid the cane.

High Cost of Colonies. All the islands expect to benefit materially with the coming of Uncle Sam. During the past five years they have been of little value to Denmark. The rise in price of these islands from \$5,000,000 in 1912 to \$25,000,000 in 1916 goes to show that even the cost of colonies has kept pace with the high cost of living. Years ago when the United States began to acquire land, \$15,000,000 for Louisiana and several other States was thought an extravagant price. After the Civil War Uncle Sam bought Alaska for \$7,200,000—a veritable gold mine, and after the Spanish-American War paid \$20,000,000 for the Philippines. Now comes the offer to Denmark of \$25,000,000 for the three little islands which comprise a total of only one hundred and thirty-eight square miles of mountainous and swampy land.

Denmark did well to hold on to her real estate until the wave of preparedness swept over the United States. The only value these islands can possibly be to our country is to keep them from falling into the hands of a foreign foe and in such case become a menace to the Panama Canal, affording a harbor for hostile ships. The advantageous situation of St. Thomas and the excellence of its harbor was recognized by the blockade runners during the Civil War who frequently made it their rendezvous. It has often been called the Gibraltar of America owing to its natural impregnability irrespective of fortifications.

INFANTILE PARALYSIS by John B. Huber A.M. M.D.

The Dread Disease Which Modern Science Has Not Yet Conquered -- The Sick Child a Pitiful Sight -- How the Disease is Conveyed -- What to Do to Prevent Contagion.

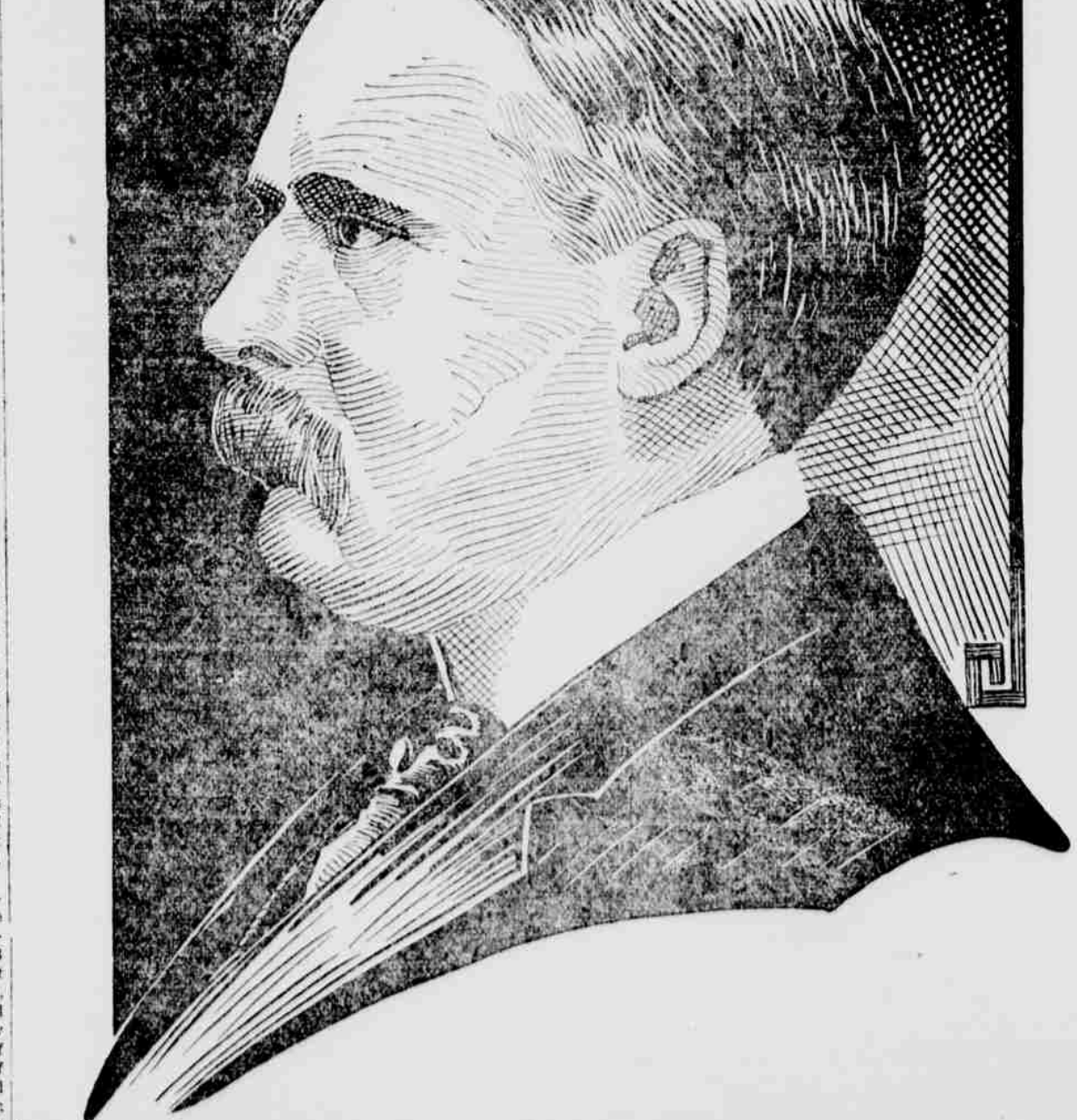
A LITTLE child, a mere infant perhaps—say, from one to five years—is put to bed seemingly in excellent health. In the morning it is found to be suffering in the cruelest way; and paralysis has come upon that child the night before.

Now the doctor makes the diagnosis of infantile paralysis. The parents will very likely recall some of the signs, but such are not the cause, they but make the child's body susceptible to the attack. The specific, the essential cause—germ of infantile paralysis. Dr. Huber and his associates at the Cerebral Institute in New York have demonstrated this germ to be extraordinarily minute parasite, detectable only by the "ultra-microscope."

How Transmitted. This germ of infantile paralysis is present in the secretions of nose and mouth. And it is conveyed by means of soiled hands, cloths, towels and the like—no other way. Thus will the germ gain access to the upper air passages of fresh victims. The predisposed or susceptible among the latter then in turn acquire the infection and develop the disease and become in time carriers of the germ. Healthy persons, such as parents, have had to be in intimate contact with the stricken children, may become carriers, though not themselves sufferers from the disease, and so the germ thus lodged in nose, throat and mouth will, in form of "sub-standard" constitution, be conveyed by the lymph channels through the exceedingly delicate honeycomb-like honey tissue at base of the skull, to the anterior artery; and so, in the blood stream to the gray nerve ganglia in anterior roots of the spinal cord and ganglia (sumps of nerve) which control the muscular nerves of the body, but especially of the extremities, and more especially the legs.

And that is why the doctors call infantile paralysis "acute anterior poliomyelitis"—gray matter inflammation.

Symptoms of Dread Disease. At a new disease a little more roughly the symptoms and the use of this disease.



hand, be complete, even in pretty severe cases.

A Pitiful Scene. When the inflammation ascends to the neck the poor child is indeed in a bad case. The lower extremities, bladder, rectum, abdomen, midriff,

plete. The child that does not die will for a long time continue prostrated; then there will be rapid improvement in the paralysis up to a certain point, then slowly for about two years; and after that any remaining paralysis will be permanent. Besides the muscular paralysis we may have to fear retarded bone growth, "dwarf foot," lateral curvature of the spine and generally impaired bodily nutrition. Such a child is likely to be "lame" as to its health, up to and after manhood and womanhood.

Afterwards. The aftermath is indeed a melancholy one. I have seen children with extremities so shriveled as to be hardly thicker than the leg of a kitchen table, and with not much more shape to them—less so distorted that the heels were where the toes should be and toes twisted to the back.

According to the virulence of the epidemic from five to beyond twenty per cent of these pathetic sufferers die—within three-fourths of the survivors are in greater or less degree crippled for life.

We have here, then, a disease which should give us all the most anxious concern. If there seems to be anything at all out of the way with one's child a doctor must be called at once. And he will distinguish this disease from influenza, typhoid fever, rheumatism, meningitis and the acute fevers generally.

Preventive Measures. Soon as the disease is discovered the stricken child should be isolated in an upper room, well ventilated, free of needless furniture and screened from flies and other insects. For since flies transmit the germs of many other diseases, why not also that of infantile paralysis? Only the doctor and the nurse should go in and out of the sick room. The stools, urine and secretions from the nose and mouth must be carefully disinfected, as in typhoid fever (kept for an hour in a 1 in 20 solution of carbolic acid). Individual eating utensils should be used by the patient and the nurse; and these should not be returned to family use until they have been thoroughly boiled (for fifteen minutes, at least); the same precautions should be applied to milk bottles or other objects which could in any way have come in contact with an infected person.

All domestic animals have to be excluded from the sick room; and the house and premises must be kept as clean, dust-free and sanitary as possible. Every case must at once be reported to the local health officer, who should promptly establish a quarantine and maintain the same at least twenty-one days.

Epidemic Of 1907. The original centres of the epidemic in the summer of 1907 were along the Atlantic seaboard, especially in the parts of New York and Boston, where many immigrants enter our country. Every summer since the number of outbreaks among our people would seem to have been increasing in the epidemic of 1910 twenty-one States were represented, as widely divergent as Colorado and Connecticut, as Delaware and Idaho, as Massachusetts and Oregon.

There is as yet no assured antitoxin serum, either curative or preventive of infantile paralysis. Nor is there any other established curative agent. The medicines given are addressed to the symptoms and in this respect give much relief. Much depends upon the care given to a patient and the efforts made to prevent the permanent crippling of those who do not die.

A large majority of the cases of infantile paralysis have occurred in families where instruction in hygiene and sanitation is needed. This is now supplied by accomplished and responsible physicians in many newspapers. One should also apply to one's local health authorities for instructive leaflets regarding infantile paralysis.

In New York during the present epidemic, children are vigorously excluded from moving picture houses and picnics and other gatherings are for the time being discontinued. The citizen is expected to aid the health authorities—those who obey sanitary laws, to instruct their neighbors who do not. All are made to feel, for the common welfare, how important is cleanliness, and how safety is especially promoted by the disinfection of household refuse.